



IGNITING THE FLAME  
RMACAC 2024

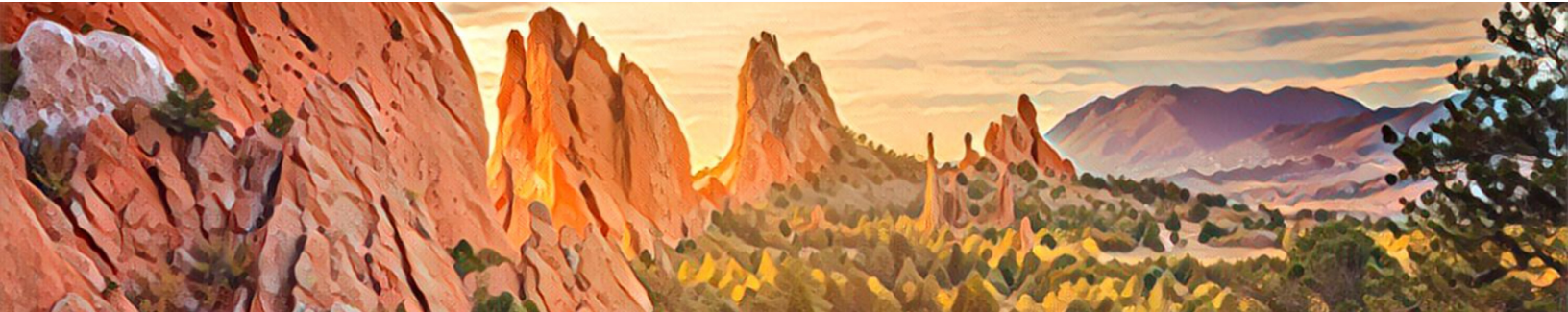
# Educational Sessions



rmacac

*Rocky Mountain  
Association for College Admission Counseling*





Only confirmed sessions appear. Titles, presenters, and descriptions are subject to change.

\*If you would like to make a change to your session, please email Kylie Rigdon at [krigdon@utk.edu](mailto:krigdon@utk.edu).

## **Pre-Conference Sessions**

\*pre-registration preferred \*\*additional fee to attend

### **Ready to Rise: Professional Development Essentials for Future Admissions Leaders**

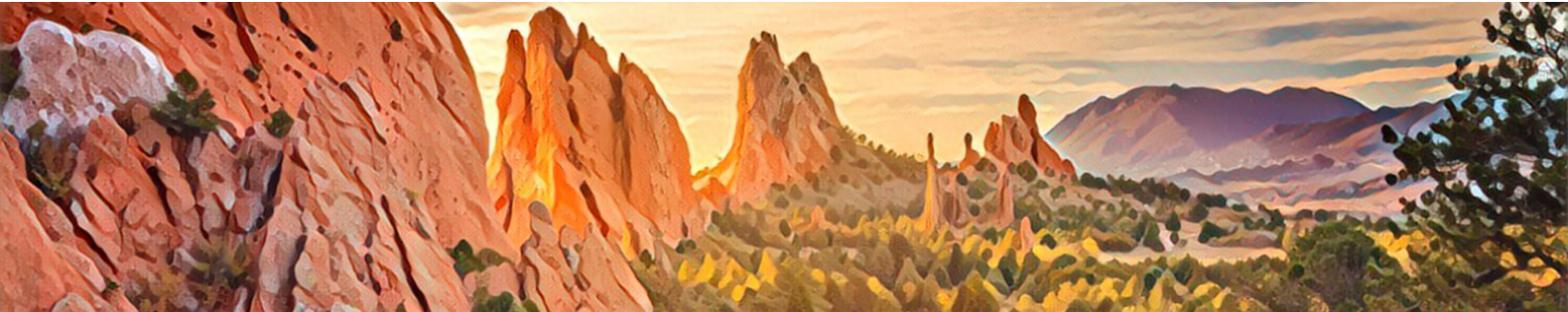
*Brittany Baker-Brousseau | University of Utah (UT)*

There are many admissions counselors who are well-seasoned but not yet at the management level. They are talented, engaged, and dedicated to college admissions, and they are eager to put in the work to advance within their current office and/or the admissions field. This pre-conference is an interactive workshop meant for those who have a few years of experience under their belt but who do not yet supervise professional staff or make policy decisions. We will explore the skills and accomplishments hiring directors want to see, learn from a variety of professional journeys, and develop our knowledge of our own professional strengths and goals to support not only our own growth but the growth of our beloved field.

### **Paving the Path: Achieving Equity, Inclusion, and Access in College Counseling for High School Students**

*Zulema Fragoso | Nogales High School (AZ) & Frank Laro | University of Denver (CO)*

This session aims to delve into the critical aspects of Diversity, Equity and Accessibility within the realm of college counseling for high school students. As educators and counselors, our responsibility is to ensure that every student, regardless of background, has equitable access to resources and guidance necessary for successful post-secondary transitions.



## Educational Sessions

Listed alphabetically. Schedule will be released at a later date.

### **AI-deas & Embracing Change in College Counseling & Admissions**

*Michelle Rasich | Rowland Hall (UT), Randy Mills | Greenhill School (TX), Diane Campbell | Liberty Common High School (CO), & Matt Bonsor | Colorado College (CO)*

ChatGPT generated this description: "ChatGPT is an ally in the college journey, aiding students with research on colleges, program details, admission requirements, and refining application essays. Additionally, it simulates interviews, offering practice questions and strategies. Addressing uncertainties, it guides on deadlines, tests, and financial aid. For counselors, it provides insights to craft recommendation letters. Furthermore, it assists in exploring majors, careers, and their alignment with colleges. Its support streamlines the application process, empowering students with informed decisions."

Join us to learn how three college counselors are using AI and to hear from a Colorado College admissions colleague about the impact of AI on their work.

### **AMA: Your Boss**

*Brittany Baker-Brousseau | University of Utah (UT)*

Even as transparency becomes a more widely valued aspect of office culture, our managers sometimes make decisions that leave us perplexed. Why are we changing our policy so late in the game? How come we don't have the funds for salary increases but we can add new events to our recruitment spending? Why did you hire an outside person instead of promoting from within? This panel of managers asks you to (anonymously) bring the questions you want answered but might feel uncomfortable asking your management team. While we won't know the specifics of your situation, we hope to offer insight into the considerations, perspectives, and priorities behind the decisions.

### **Assessing Post-secondary Options for Students with Autism.**

*Samantha McMillan-New | McMillan Education (CO)*

This session will focus on how to assess colleges and other post-secondary options for autistic students with needs outside of academic support (for example, social and independent living skills). I am an occupational therapist as well as an educational consultant, so I bring a unique perspective to the college counseling process. Presentation will include: how to access the supportive options that a college offers for students outside of the accommodations office—social coaching? life skills coaching? residential options?, programs to consider if a student isn't ready for college—wrap around support programs, transitional year programs, coaching models, and how to assess if an individual with autism is ready for college and how to prep these individuals.



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### **Attacking Anxiety: An Approach That Works**

*Aaron Ragon | Cherry Creek Elevation (CO)*

How do we meaningfully and systematically help students suffering from anxiety? Sometimes 504's are written to protect students from anxiety but is this the best solution? Usually it isn't. Anxiety must be challenged and this should be done in a way that is personalized and involves parents as partners. An easy model for understanding anxiety and the brain will be shared along with a method for engaging with anxiety that is also easy to understand and implement. Participants will practice using the model and leave with a few tangible tools that they can use immediately. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone interested in learning how to understand and help others with anxiety!

### **Building a Professional Network and Engaging In Professional Organizations**

*Michelle Rasich | Rowland Hall (UT), Erica Johnson | Westminster College (UT), & Heather Daniels | Colorado State University (CO)*

Does the idea of introducing yourself to strangers make your heart race? Once you do, are you at a loss for words? You've thought about getting involved with professional organizations but you don't think that you have the time or anything to offer. You are mistaken and underestimating yourself! Please join us for tips and strategies to create meaningful professional connections and engagement opportunities, and to learn why it's personally and professionally valuable.

### **Collaboration for Postsecondary Success: Engaging with your colleagues to incorporate transition-related skills and knowledge into your school's curriculum**

*Dr. Jill Corbin | The Good Doctor: Prescribing Bright Futures (CO), Dr. Mike Dunn | Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center (CO), & Michael Robinson | Atlas Prep High School (CO)*

Working on the threshold of secondary and postsecondary learning gives us unique insight into the skills and knowledge necessary for students to thrive. In this session, we will discuss how to leverage our unique vantage point to advocate for the incorporation of these academic and transition-related skills into your school's curriculum.

Specifically, we will offer some suggestions for collaboration points and specific skills you might target in your conversations with colleagues. The session will also incorporate small group discussion as an opportunity for you to identify and explore how these conversations might move forward in your school.





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### **College Ready Counselors: Igniting Your Resources**

*Diane Campbell | Liberty Common High School (CO) & Brennan Barnard | Khan Lab School (CA)*

Much of our work is creating systems of support for our students at a rapid pace. How can we find the space and time to ignite our resources when we don't have the time and energy to keep up with a rapidly changing profession?

Much of the work we do with students requires that we are prepared for a high level of standards of college knowledge. We ask that students be college ready, but are we as counselors' college ready? Do we have the necessary knowledge and resources to support the needs of our students? With limited budgets and an access to professional development, how are we staying current with college admissions updates and processes. How can we create spaces of calm, support and ignite the work we do to meet the needs of our students?

### **Counselor Recommendations: Making Them Worth the Reader's While**

*Henry Whipple | DSST: Cedar High School (CO) & Melissa Mayes | DSST: College View High School (CO)*


In authoring recommendation letters on behalf of students, college counselors have a profound opportunity to advocate for an applicant's candidacy. As admission representatives sort through extensive writing in reviewing application materials (teacher recommendations, counselor recommendations, essays, and more), however, these letters can quickly lose meaning if not written with intentionality and perspective on what goes beyond the surface level.

Our lineup of high school counseling directors and college representatives will support high school, CBO, and independent counselors by sharing intentional strategies for taking counselor recommendations to the next level. Through analysis of topics including vocabulary choice, admission reader preferences, and depth of anecdotes, participants will return home with an improved toolkit for improved advocacy of their college applicants while keeping admission readers engaged and invested in the content shared. The tactics and counseling approaches covered in this session will meaningfully further your support of students and help ensure that they stand out for their unique achievements, characteristics, and impact so as to make best use of admission readers' time.

### **De-Mystifying Music Admissions**

*Kate Bittner | Legato College Consulting, LLC (AZ)*

Guiding creative and musically-inclined students through finding a great music program can be complicated. It can be even more tough to convince parents that pursuing a music degree is worth it! This session will dive into what to expect when applying for a collegiate music program, what kinds of things to look for in a good-fit program, how to best help you students navigate this process, and the many ways that a music degree is valuable in the "real" world.



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### **Everything you need to know about communication from A to Gen Z**

*Alex Slaughter | Texas A&M University (TX, CO-Based)*

Increasing we are seeing it is harder and harder to connect with our students. They don't check email, they don't answer the phone, they don't want to talk in person. So what can we do to still get vital information across and give them the resources they need in a mode that will be most effective for this generation. Learn about their communications style, what they are looking for as they are looking at their college search, and the unique ways this generation needs our help.

### **From passenger to Driver's seat: Practical tools to support LD students own the college transition process**


*William Gledhill | Beacon College (FL) & Megan Woster | New Way Academy (AZ)*

Students with ADHD, Dyslexia, and other learning differences are attending college at higher rates than ever before. Counselors are reporting difficulties working with these students and their families. Participants will receive practical tools to engage, support, and guide neurodiverse students with learning differences on their transition to college.

### **Innovating for Equity - The Power of Creative Partnerships**

*Carlos Jimenez | Peak Education (CO), Nancy Hernandez | University of Colorado Colorado Springs (CO), & Kate Brennan | Minds Matter Colorado (CO)*

Pikes Peak College Access Professionals is a new regional network in southern Colorado that combines the resources of community-based organizations, college pathway programs, scholarship organizations and foundations to increase college attainment in our city and region. Our activities are creating a ripple effect that is strengthening each program while also creating a stronger access ecosystem in our community. We will discuss our journey in creating our newly formed network and the positive impact on students and families, and schools. We will explore how foundations and nonprofit organizations can multiply resources beyond grant making and discuss the role that leveraging technology can lead to more students and their families being informed about college choices.



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### **Interstate Recruitment in a Tightening Enrollment Environment**

*Margo Colalancia | Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) & Peace Bransberger | Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)*

Universities and colleges in the region have experienced a range of enrollment situations over the past several years including pandemic effects, demographics, and affordability and value concerns. They can expect further enrollment challenges from smaller youth cohorts, COVID impacts to academic preparation, shifts to postsecondary non-college options, and competing free or reduced tuition programs. Attend this session to discuss your enrollment trends compared to what WICHE projects ([www.knocking.wiche.edu](http://www.knocking.wiche.edu)), interstate recruitment and/or merit-based approaches, and WICHE's Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), as one enrollment strategy for attracting students from RMACAC states looking for affordable out-of-state study options in the West.

### **Investing in the future: tips and tricks on how to make college affordable for our students**

*Hannah Haage | Northern Arizona University (AZ, CO-Based), Adrienne Loveland | University of Wyoming (WY, CO-Based), & Diane Campbell | Liberty Common High School (CO)*

Guiding students to find a financial fit in the college search process can be challenging! This session will discuss ways to make college more affordable through programs such as WUE, residency, external scholarship searches, and credit transfer. We will also provide financial aid resources and recommendations for programming that high school counselors can provide students as they navigate the college search process.

### **James to Jimmy; Sam to Sally. Supporting students through the application process - a round table discussion**

*Sarah Morissette | Dawson School (CO) & Jen Gagne | Colorado School of Mines (CO)*

The college application begins with a simple question: Name. But things can easily get complicated, James Jr. goes by Jimmy - his school record says so. Transcript: Jimmy Smith. And Chloe goes by Kyle, but CollegeBoard still says Chloe. How do we support all of our students - especially those exploring their identity - in this primary step while applying to college - while also aligning all supporting documents under the same name. And what if the parents find out and are none to please? Join us for a roundtable discussion, with social emotional high school counselors and admissions professionals to discuss best practices, keeping all stakeholders in mind.

### **Modeling Best Practices in College Admissions**

*Erica Johnson | Westminster University (UT), Adrienne Loveland | University of Wyoming (WY, CO-Based), & Constance Lumumba-Perez | Phoenix Country Day School (AZ)*

Join the Admissions Practices committee, and RMACAC colleagues, to discuss NACAC's Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admissions. Attendees will learn how to promote, advocate, and model the spirit of the Guide to Ethical Practice. This session focuses on how to use the document, train staff on ethical practices, and tackle dilemmas that arise in our field.





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### **More than the Numbers: Inside the Data of Class Size, Capacity, and the Classroom Experience**

*Kylie Rigdon | University of Tennessee (TN, CO-Based)*

What's the student-to-faculty ratio? Average class size? Simple questions at a college fair or visit, but many layers to the answer. Admissions reps are given basic answers to these questions, but there's more behind the data. In this session, I will breakdown the general terminology used in Registrar offices in relation to the timetable—course schedule—and how as admissions reps we can have more effective conversations about the classroom experience at our institutions—regardless of size! Fresh off an internship within the Registrar's office at a large, public flagship, I bring you Timetable 101 and how to genuinely talk about the academic experience.

### **Narratives of Parenthood in Admissions: A Panel**

*Nicole Fratto Garcia | Trinity University (TX), Constance Lumumba-Perez | Phoenix Country Day School (AZ), & Quincey "Q" Malauulu Otuafi | Westminster University (UT)*


Parenthood in the world of admissions can be a tricky space to navigate on either side of the desk. Join us for a panel of parents in admissions to hear various perspectives and challenges of navigating a work/life balance. Whether you are a parent, on the road to becoming a parent, or working alongside parents, this will be a safe space to ask questions and learn from one another.

### **New Ventures for Authentic Connection-Tech and Outreach in the New Admission Recruitment Process**

*Carlos Jimenez | Peak Education (CO), Heather Daniels | Colorado State University (CO), Kim Medina | Colorado Mesa University (CO), & Pedro Ramirez | Peak Education (CO)*

After years of stagnation, the admission community is beginning to utilize technology and new outreach methods in innovative ways to reach students and create new opportunities to tell students about their institutions. From new initiatives pulling big levers like creating promise scholarships, rural community engagement and new technologies like Start.edu from Slate.org, EAB's Appily, and Peak Education's InterWoven platform, there are suddenly several new ways that students and counselors can engage with offices of admission. This session will provide a summary of the emerging new practices, tech-related tools in the admission landscape as well as insights from Directors of Admission who are currently or considering utilizing some of the emerging platforms in their processes. We will also discuss strategies to help students prioritize and sort through the many new opportunities that are becoming available for them.





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### **Powerful Persuasion: Best Practices for Effective Advocacy**

*Nick Grenoble | The Waterford School (UT) & Stephanie Brazinsky | South High School (CO)*

Are you passionate about impacting equity in higher education and student access? Join us in this session to learn about the best practices for advocacy efforts with your legislators, school board, administration, and anyone else you are trying to persuade. We will review the Public Narrative Framework developed by Marshall Ganz as well as the lessons learned from our October event with NACAC Director of Advocacy CJ Powell and UT State Senator Kathleen Riebe. We will also discuss current legislative priorities and ways to get involved with RMACAC's legislative advocacy efforts.

### **Preview The College Finder book**

*Jay McCann | The Westminster Schools (GA) & Steve Antonoff | Antonoff Associates (CO)*

Learn about insights from the book's research and survey results that could help inform your practice with students you advise.

### **Putting the "S" in HSI: Admissions Practices That Support Latinx Students and HSI Missions**


*Alex Nuñez | W.A. Franke Honors College, University of Arizona (AZ) & José David Reynoza | University of Northern Colorado (CO)*

Hundreds of colleges and universities are recognized as Hispanic-Serving Institutions, or HSIs, and many more are on the verge of becoming such. But how do admissions practices fit within the mission of an HSI? It is easy for recruitment offices to overlook the "servingness" aspect of HSIs, and instead think of their institutions as Hispanic-Enrolling or Hispanic-Producing Institutions. This panel will discuss best practices, adoptive mindsets, and means of support for Latinx students in their college search process, and how admissions offices can play a role in the experience of "servingness" within their institutions.

### **Recognizing and Supporting Military-Affiliated Students in the College Search Process**

*Anne-Browning Wilson | Mississippi State University (MS, TX-Based) & Rachel Ritter | Xavier University (OH, CO-Based)*

This session focuses on the specific needs of military-affiliated students and how best to support them throughout the admission process. We will explore what defines a military-affiliated student and what unique attributes this group may experience. It will also outline additional benefits and programs available to these students, both federally and on a university level.



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### **Rethinking the Admissions Recruiter Role**

*Julia Eischeid | University of Arizona (AZ) & Amanda Quintana | University of Arizona (AZ)*

We are much more than what the Forbes “What Is The Job Of A College Admissions Officer In 2023?” article considers an Admissions Recruiter. Yes, the hours and days can be long, but in this session we’ll review what it means to be a front line institution representative and explore positive ways in which we can support ourselves, each other, and the students, families, and school counselors we serve. Learn how we’ve been able to recruit our largest and most diverse incoming classes at the University of Arizona despite the perception of what the role of an Admissions representative entails.

### **Servant Leadership: Opportunities to Give Back and Grow through the RMACAC Board**

*Alex Nunez | University of Arizona W. A. Franke Honors College (AZ), Sara Strickland | City Academy Charter School (UT), Jon Mires | Hastings College (NE, CO-Based), & Abby Tudor | Northern Arizona University (AZ)*

Are you looking for ways to broaden your knowledge of our profession? Are you eager to learn new skills and put them to good use for your colleagues? Please join us to hear more about the impact you could make (and ways you could develop yourself) by volunteering on the RMACAC Board!

### **Shifting Terrain: Empowering Students in Selective College Admission**

*Sara Purviance | Colorado Academy (CO), Ali Springer | Collegewise, & Matt Bonser | Colorado College (CO)*

The selective admission process has shifted rapidly in the last three years. Join us to explore and analyze the most notable trends, from evolving testing requirements and the increasing importance of Early Decision, to post-Supreme Court ruling changes and expanded options to enroll in alternative start programs. This session will equip attendees with resources and tips to support and empower our students amidst the increasing noise, ensuring they can approach their college process with confidence.





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### **Sip of Sweet Tea: A Guide to Southern Universities**

*Kylie Rigdon | University of Tennessee (TN, CO-Based), Beth Hodge | University of Alabama (AL, CO-Based), Andrew Psaltis | University of Oklahoma (OK, CO-Based), Anne Browning Wilson | Mississippi State University (MS, TX-Based), Emma Briggs | University of Missouri (MO, CO-Based), & Alex Slaughter | Texas A&M University (TX, CO-Based)*

Football. Fraternities. Fun. All students need to know about going to college in the South. Right? Nope! We are so much more! While our rivalries are legendary, so are our academics. Southern institutions provide students with research, internships, and networking opportunities that are quite literally out of this world—seriously, we have a lot of astronauts. Southern schools are high on many students lists right now; this session will provide an overview of the non-athletic benefits these schools provide and a panel from regional admissions representatives ready to demonstrate why in the South it really does Just Mean More.

### **SRAR/SSAR? Oh My! Pulling the Curtain Back on Self-Reporting Transcripts**

*Kylie Rigdon | University of Tennessee (TN, CO-Based) & Katie Cannon | University of Oregon (OR, CO-Based)*


Does self-reporting transcripts bring you or your students to tears? Do you struggle to explain the why to already stressed-out students? In this session, the University of Tennessee and the University of Oregon will explain why they have chosen to use the SRAR/SSAR in their admissions process, tips and tricks to help your students, and what happens after student hits submit! Bring your questions and open minds to learn more about the Self-Reported Academic Record and why it's not really as bad as it feels.

### **The Final Rose: It's a big decision for our bachelors and bachelorettes**

*Diane Campbell | Liberty Common High School (CO), Damien Bracey | Valley Vista High School (AZ), Heather Daniels | Colorado State University (CO), & Erica Johnson | Westminster College (UT)*

Apply Early! The push to apply early for high school students is growing. Direct Admit, ED, Early apps, etc, Is there really a need? What about our students who are uncertain about where to apply, have limited funds, resources, and support, and come to the common app table late—is it truly too late? What engagement is ongoing? Is it necessary?

Many high school students are not socially/emotionally ready to apply or commit to the application process. How can we support students where they are without making them feel they are left without options and still have time to apply? In this session we will discuss approaches from university engagement and how we can communicate more effectively on the high school side to our students.



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### **The First-Gen Experience: The Importance of Inclusion and Belonging on Retention and Student Well-Being**

*Alicia Kelly | The Waterford School (UT) & Brett Fedor | Fort Collins High School (CO)*

Many first-generation students “don’t know what they don’t know” when it comes to the transition from high school to college. As educators, counselors, and admissions representatives, we support as we can through the typical transactional process: applications, financial aid, and housing. But what happens when they get there? What truly works for these students? Engage in open and vulnerable conversation led by a public high school counselor and his former first-generation student (now a school counselor herself) and explore the importance of consistent and inclusive support at all stages of post-secondary transition.

### **The Virtual Voice of Reason: Tips and Tricks from a Virtual School Counselor**

*Cindy Black | Los Alamos High School (NM, NV-Based)*

Having been both a traditional and virtual school counselor, there are many tools that are useful in both environments. I will share my insights including the technology I have found to be helpful and how to connect with students. Bring your ideas to share. Do you want to know what it is like being a virtual school counselor? Are you a virtual school counselor and would like some tips and tricks? Are you considering moving to a virtual environment? Are you a traditional school counselor looking for technology to make your job easier? This session is for you.

### **There is Not Enough Time: Meeting the Needs of All Students in an Ever-Changing Landscape**

*Craig Wittgrove | Cherry Creek High School (CO), Damien Bracey | Valley Vista High School (AZ), & John O'Connor | Natrona County Schools (WY)*

Research shows that comprehensive school counseling programs have positive outcomes on student achievement and increase the likelihood of students enrolling in college and career. We also know that counselors are stretched thin in many high schools, particularly in public high schools, and must find creative ways to expand their bandwidth. Come commiserate, collaborate, learn, and laugh with three counselors from three different high schools who are developing a comprehensive counseling program in collaboration with counselors, administrators, and teachers.





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### **Turning Aspiration to Action: A Roadmap and Resources for New and Novice Counselors**

*Jesse Carrillo | Contigo Ed (NM)*

Are you a new or novice counselor? Do you support one? You deserve a single place where you can not only access information about advising students to and through career and college, but hear from real, live school practitioners on how this information translates into actual advising. In this demo-style session, you'll get FREE access to our on-demand course, including our videos, ready-made lesson plans, presentations, and more! Whether you are building your program from scratch or working to upskill in specific areas, we have resources for you. Explore the career and college going process through case studies. Access resources to build systems and structures to manage your caseload so that every student of yours can get the differentiated advising they need.

### **Unlocking the Future of Assessment: Navigating the Digital SAT Suite**

*Nicole Gibbs | College Board (NY)*

In this session, we will delve into the Digital SAT Suite of Assessments, illuminating its transformative potential for students. We aim to empower educators with a profound understanding of this groundbreaking suite and provide invaluable insights into the facilitation of digital SAT testing. We will share outcomes on the SAT alongside the successful implementation of the domestic digital PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT administration. This session is tailored for educators, offering a holistic view of how the Digital SAT Suite can shape the future of assessment. Join us to discover how to seamlessly adapt to the digital SAT Suite assessments and incorporate its elements into your students' learning journey. By attending this session, educators will be equipped with the knowledge, insights, and confidence to navigate the evolving landscape of educational assessments using the Digital SAT Suite.

### **Yep, POWERFUL for Individual Academic and Career Planning and Postsecondary Readiness!**

*Kim Rasmussen | ACT, Inc. (KS)*

High schools work hard to cultivate student college and career readiness. When students are supported in identifying interests, skills, and strengths their pathway in high school is strategic and they transition more seamlessly into postsecondary and workplace requirements. You may have some experience with the ACT and WorkKeys, but do you know the rest of the story? Do you know how these assessments work together for benchmarking readiness while providing personalized data? How WorkKeys NCRC has Digital Badging setting up a "diploma +" for graduation? Come learn how ACT's powerful tools support career and academic planning and postsecondary success.